the Confucianists—and for those who denounced the present and praised antiquity. Punishments only slightly less drastic were decreed for those who failed to burn their books and for officials who did not enforce the edict. The conduct of the people, so it was ordered, must be regulated entirely by the officials by means of the law, and not by any books in which "the sayings of the ancient kings" were held up as an example.

Just how thoroughly the decree was enforced we do not know. It may be that the literary losses commonly ascribed to it were due more to the wars which immediately preceded the triumph of Ch'in. Certainly many of the cities were burned in these struggles and the collections of books contained in them must have suffered heavily. From the catalogue of the imperial library of the succeeding dynasty, moreover, it is clear that the sweep was by no means thorough. Some destruction there undoubtedly was, however—enough to bring down upon the memory of Shih Huang Ti the opprobrium of generations of writers of the school which under later dynasties was made orthodox, that of Confucius.

Scholars who violated the command were executed and even the heir apparent was exiled to the frontier for criticizing the Emperor. Here again, however, there is some debate as to whether the number who suffered the death penalty was very large. Given the difficult problem of unification to which Shih Huang Ti had set himself, and the methods to which the victory of Ch'in seemed to owe so much, his action is quite understandable.

The reign was by no means one of complete suppression of literary advance—or at least not of the tools of scholarship. Li Ssu

is the reported inventor of a new style of script, the "Lesser Seal." The "Lesser Seal" characters, it must be noted, were already in use in the latter part of the Chou. At most Li Ssu merely constructed an improved and standardized list and made it uniform throughout the realm, thus further promoting the unity of the Empire and its culture. To the commander-in-chief of the Emperor's armies, Meng T'ien, is ascribed—incorrectly, for the brush pen had been in use for centuries—the invention of the writing brush of hair. Probably about the same time silk, presumably already employed for such purposes, was further substituted for bamboo slips as a vehicle for the written characters.

As we have suggested, Shih Huang Ti, not content with unify-